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DE RUEHJA #3044/01 3041151
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FM AMEMBASSY JAKARTA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6880
INFO RUEHGG/UN SECURITY COUNCIL COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RUEHJS/ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS PRIORITY
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING PRIORITY 4442
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO PRIORITY 1040
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 1469
RUEHWL/AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON 1952
RUEHPB/AMEMBASSY PORT MORESBY 3516
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHINGTON DC
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 JAKARTA 003044

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NSC FOR E.PHU

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/31/2017
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [PGOV](#) [XC](#) [BM](#) [ID](#)
SUBJECT: WAYS FORWARD ON THE BURMA ISSUE

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Classified By: DepPol/C Daniel E. Turnbull, reasons 1.4 (b,d).

11. (C) SUMMARY: Michael Vatikiotis of the Henry Dumont Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue offered ideas on moving the Burma situation forward, after discussions with leaders in the region, including Indonesian Foreign Minister Wirajuda. Vatikiotis said it was important that ASEAN unanimously ratify the proposed Charter and that the long-term benefits of a strong Charter not be sacrificed for "short-term gains in Burma." He said ASEAN would act on Burma only in 2008, proposed Indonesia play a role as "convenor" of a process based on the "cocktail party" model that proved successful in Cambodia, and emphasized that any discussion with the Burmese regime needed to include its legitimate concerns of regional stability, territorial integrity and sovereignty. END SUMMARY.

12. (C) DCM met with met with Michael Vatikiotis, Regional Director for the Henry Dumont Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue, on October 30 to discuss possible ways forward on Burma. Vatikiotis, (please protect), who is based in Singapore, has been a regular and very lucid interlocutor on a range of conflict resolution issues, including the Middle East. The discussion followed a meetings Vatikiotis had had with Indonesian officials and policy advisers, including Foreign Minister Wirajuda, earlier in the day. The views expressed below are Vatikiotis' synthesis of those meetings and other recent discussions he has had within the region on Burma. His views were informed by but do not entirely reflect the view of the Indonesian government.

13. (C) Vatikiotis made several major points on Burma:

-- IMPORTANCE OF ASEAN CHARTER RATIFICATION: Vatikiotis stressed the importance of the ASEAN draft Charter and its ratification at the November 18 ASEAN summit. This represented a sustained effort by ASEAN over many years, was a significant achievement that the international community should support, and should not be sacrificed for "short-term gains in Burma." The Charter, particularly its human-rights provisions, would become a standard against which to measure Burma (and other ASEAN members) in the future. Discouraging

Burma from signing would leave a permanent mark on it, allowing Burma to claim exception from its provisions. Moreover, Singapore was cool to the Charter, and non-signature by Burma (and Thailand) would play into Singapore's hands by weakening the Charter's authority. The international community, in Vatikiotis' view, should support the Charter's unanimous adoption at this year's summit.

-- ACTION IN 2008: Vatikiotis said ASEAN leaders were not looking to resolve the Burma issue at the ASEAN summit, and were not likely to take further action as a group until 2008.

He suggested there were various options for Burma's representation at the summit, which could amount to some level of differentiation. Vatikiotis pointed out that Thailand would take over as ASEAN chair in 2008 and would be able to exert more leverage than Singapore in that capacity.

-- ROLE AS INDONESIA AS "CONVENOR": Vatikiotis suggested the process used two decades earlier in Cambodia could serve as a model, where Indonesia, using what was aptly described as a "cocktail party" approach, had convened relevant players for an open-ended discussion. These discussions had helped open the way to resolution. Vatikiotis recommended Indonesia, and specifically former FM Ali Alatas, assume this role. Vatikiotis offered the ASEAN-centered "convenor" approach as an alternative to UN Special Envoy Gambari's Contact Group. Indonesia wanted to play a role but was not in the current Troika, he noted, and this would be an ideal way to involve Indonesia. In a recent discussion with DCM, Indonesian CSIS foreign-policy expert Rizal Sukma had broached the idea of a similar discussion among the relevant Burmese parties only. Vatikiotis believed the Troika and China should be included as well, in addition to the Burmese parties. In that regard, Burmese opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi appeared to be ready for dialogue but so far had not said so in interviews; she needed to do that, in Vatikiotis' view.

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-- INCLUDE LEGITIMATE JUNTA CONCERNS: Any discussion with the Burmese regime, Vatikiotis stressed, must include its concerns, i.e., regional stability, territorial integrity and sovereignty. It would be difficult, he said, to get the generals to the table without some discussion of these issues.

14. (C) Commenting on the dynamics among ASEAN members, Vatikiotis noted that, in his opinion, Indonesia and Malaysia generally considered Singapore to be too pro-Western and therefore were particularly sensitive to initiatives by Singapore. When Western capitals praised Singaporean initiatives, Indonesia and Malaysia tended to interpret Singapore's actions, often mistakenly, as a reflection of Western capitals' desires or requests.

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